

*A chance
to be
yourself*

*La chance
d'être
soi-même*



The goal: Equality in the working world.
A chance for women to follow their own interests.
To be what they want to be. In the Public Service
of Canada, the Office of Equal Employment
Opportunities is working toward that goal.
"A chance to be yourself" is no slogan. It's an idea
becoming a reality.

Le but: l'égalité dans le monde du travail.
La chance pour les femmes de s'épanouir. D'être
ce qu'elles veulent être. À la Fonction publique
du Canada, le Bureau d'Égalité d'accès à
l'emploi poursuit ce but. "La chance d'être
soi-même" n'est pas un slogan. C'est une idée
qui se concrétise.



Public Service Canada

Fonction publique Canada

A stylized illustration of a butterfly, likely a monarch, with its wings spread. The wings are filled with a pattern of concentric, wavy circles in shades of pink and white, creating a textured, almost wood-grain-like appearance. The butterfly's body is a simple black outline. The entire illustration is set against a light beige background. In the bottom left corner, there is a barcode and the number 3 1761 11552960 4.

“Une société ne peut pas devenir adulte sans la participation qui ne doit pas reposer sur un principe d'identité, mais d'égalité.”
Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Toronto, 3 mars 1971

For years, women have faced major obstacles when it came to the world of work. The few who escaped the "expected" female occupations such as teacher, nurse, librarian or secretary often found the going difficult. Some career areas were designated as "men only". In others, the career ladder seemed to stop abruptly at the middle rung. Rare indeed was the woman who had reached the higher echelons of any organization.

But we are changing. In this era when women comprise more than a third of the labour force, society's traditional attitudes toward the working woman are visibly eroding. The day may not be far off when the "full participation" of women in the world of work is commonplace.

In the Public Service of Canada, the country's largest employer of women, we are working toward that day. We have established an office of Equal Employment Opportunities to plan, promote and co-ordinate programs to help ensure that all persons, regardless of sex, are considered on the basis of ability and initiative, whatever the career area, whatever the echelon.

On the following pages you will meet women who are making a career for themselves in many different fields. Some have unusual jobs. All have jobs that, for them, are personally stimulating and challenging. We chose them to demonstrate that in the Public Service the chance *does* exist for a woman to explore her full potential in whatever field she may decide to direct her energies — quite simply, a work atmosphere which offers "A Chance to be Yourself".

Carol Lutes,
Co-ordinator,
Equal Employment Opportunities,
Public Service Commission of Canada.

What do you say when someone asks you how to obtain a supply of caribou teeth? In my job it can happen. Being responsible for advising the Canadian giftware and handicraft industries, which is what I do as a commodity officer, is always interesting though not necessarily that unusual. I am also one of the few females working in this field; but then I was always the only girl in my economics courses in university, so nothing has really changed. The only thing that bothered me at first was all the confusing technical terms.

Since the handicraft people tend not to be very business-minded, a person in this field needs to have a practical side. But it also helps to have an artistic interest too. Although I have never considered myself particularly artistic I have recently taken night courses in drawing and copper hammering — it certainly makes you appreciate how difficult it is. In fact you become a "jack of all trades" in this business. When I take travelling displays of giftware and handicrafts to trade fairs I not only promote the crafts but sometimes I also set up the booths and do some of the selling. Often I'm so busy that the only time I get to see the city is on the final day when I have a chance to go out for lunch. Visiting places like Boston, New York and New Orleans can be exciting but it is not always so. What I really enjoy are the musical tours. Then I can indulge in both my artistic and my practical side. I also do various crafts — how they are made, and I also participate in the business discussions. I probably won't stay with this job permanently as I eventually want to study for my doctorate, but while I'm here I'm really enjoying myself.

After I graduated from university, I was so glad to get a job I was interested in that I really didn't care about all the other stories I had heard. Everyone told me, "Whatever you do, don't work for the government!" It seemed as though they were warning me about a very real danger in forgotten corners. But in my field it has proved to be just the opposite. Right now the opportunities for computer programmers are fantastic. There is rapid promotion and the average staying time in one position is about one and a half years. I think I'd be a fool to leave the government. It's easy to move up and around and there is more of a chance to develop along the lines that interest me personally. They don't just talk about what I can do for them, but they also talk about what they can do for me. I am encouraged to read and study, and because of this, I have been taking courses ever since I began. There is still some prejudice against women but you can beat it—I've done it. As a woman I can get by on merit but I have to really work. On the other hand, say I don't work with everything from straight programming to developing methods. My job is to make it easier for the statistician to analyse the results of various experiments conducted here. I like the interplay between the programming and the maths. Since the work is in my head I never really leave it behind, but it is this involvement which makes it so interesting.

Before coming to Ottawa as a Foreign Service Officer I had been studying and working in Europe for four years. My background in economics and my time in Europe had left me with a strong interest in the area of international policy. I decided that I wanted to come back to my own country, and to Ottawa where the important decisions on Canadian foreign policy were being made.

I like a job where I am dealing with "things that really matter" and where I can see concrete results. That is one of the main reasons I find my work in the Bureau of Economic and Scientific Affairs, Department of External Affairs, satisfying. I am responsible for much of External's input into international civil aviation policy; this involves co-ordination with other Government departments and agencies, liaison with the airlines and representation of the Department's interests both in Ottawa and abroad in bilateral air negotiations and at international conferences concerning civil aviation. Because the work is fast-moving and varied, I remain active and interested — civil aviation is an exciting subject with tremendous political and financial implications for governments.

As with any other job, there are disadvantages as well as advantages. The hours are long, but of course any really interesting job makes this kind of demand upon an officer.

Perhaps the demands are even greater on women — it appears they have to be that much better in order to establish their credibility and carry weight — what traditionally has been looked upon as a man's profession.

One side attraction of the job is that it involves a fair amount of travel. Last year, for example, I participated in negotiations of air agreements in Jamaica, Barbados, Israel and the United States. As a career Foreign Service Officer I could be sent almost anywhere since we have about 80 missions in every corner of the world.

It must be obvious from what I have said that the advantages of the career outweigh any drawbacks — otherwise I wouldn't be here.

I wrote the Public Service exams at university for a lark, just dreaming that one day I'd be working here. But when they offered a well-paying job I took it. I needed the money and it seemed like the answer. Although I didn't get the type of work I liked at first, I enjoy what I'm doing now. As a training officer it's my job to create an awareness and an enthusiasm to learn, and to help people expand their knowledge. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, I've already produced a system of thirty half-hour video tapes aimed at helping people to learn their new job in a particular way. As a producer, I script the tapes (which are basically TV programmes) and design the visuals. But the audio-visual side is just one aspect of my work. I also design and implement orientation programmes for new staff, and old staff going into new positions. I'm not really an expert in anything. You might say I'm a catalyst for a group getting together. Although the job can be a million headaches I love it and really have no complaints. There are drawbacks of course, and I don't want to get in a position where I'm an ambassador and I don't want to get in a position where I'm not going to grow. Here I am sent regularly on courses and seminars which means that I am always improving my skills. I want to be successful and I feel that in this job I'm going somewhere.

When I first came to work for the government I had a feeling that it could be good. But as a student I hadn't experienced work at any responsible level and didn't really know what to expect. In my first year I felt completely lost in the huge government structure and I just didn't know how to relate to what was going on around me. By my second year I had come to understand the people and the structure and began to feel more at ease.

Before entering the Public Service I had realised that it was a bureaucracy and that like all other bureaucracies it could be frustrating. I found that this was true, but I also found that a bureaucracy is simply the best organization which does the job that we need. It's only the people in it that make it so. By being in personnel I felt that I could help change some of this and it became a very tangible goal for me.

Treasury Board, where I work, is concerned with the division of resources within the government and because of this it's an important link between the political structure and the various departments. My job as organization and manpower development officer with the Treasury Board is really two-fold. One aspect is analysing the health of an organization. If it's not effective it's my job as part of a team to find out why. Also, I'm currently developing a system for the appraisal of personnel which enables a manager to assess an employee's performance. In this job I really enjoy the progression and the working through of a problem. Personnel is also one of the easier fields for a woman to move ahead in; there are many areas from which to choose an almost unlimited scope.